

# Mont Vernon Third Graders visit PMEC

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Photos by Candy Shirey

It was much too nice of a day to be in school on Monday. Sunny skies and warm temperatures greeted Mont Vernon third graders and chaperones, who spent an adventure filled day at the Peabody Mill Environmental Center (PMEC) in Amherst. Groups of kids and adults alternated between three learning stations to uncover hidden Pond Life; identify Plants and Trees; and visit with Reptiles and Amphibians.

Naturalist Paul Scopa brought his Pond Life group out to the PMEC pond to explore the plants and critters that make this habitat their home. Frogs, newts, and turtles were caught and inspected; and then the group gathered water, sand, and mud to investigate under the microscope in our science lab. The young learners eagerly mounted their finds on slides and tried to identify the unique and interesting insects and plant life found in the PMEC pond.



*Paul Scopa and a student from MVVS inspect a bug found in the PMEC pond.*

The Plants and Trees group, led by naturalist Branden Vigneault, gathered on the grass to learn all about the structure of plants and trees; types of trees; photosynthesis; reproduction; and plant survival. The group then hiked into the woods on one of our trails to see what they could find. Checking the leaves and bark for evidence, students identified many trees and plants on their hiking adventure.



*MVVS students identify a Yellow birch tree.*

During Reptiles and Amphibians, Herpetologist and lizard lover Diane Hayden introduced excited students to a baby albino corn snake, a full grown corn snake, an African Uromastyx lizard and an Australian Bearded Dragon. Students learned about the critters, what they eat, and what it takes to make them happy in captivity. Brave students and chaperones even had the chance to touch the critters, including the four and a half foot corn snake.



*Students and chaperones lined up to touch a 4.5 foot corn snake.*

Exclamations of “that was cool” and “that was really awesome” could be heard while students filled the hallway, switching from one station to the next. By early afternoon, the activities were over and exhausted students and chaperones piled into their cars and headed down the dirt road toward home.

The Peabody Mill Environmental Center (PMEC) is an environmental and science education center which abuts almost 600 acres of Joe English conservation land. Located at the end of Brook Road in Amherst, New Hampshire, the PMEC is directed by the Amherst Recreation Department. The mission of PMEC is to foster an awareness, understanding and appreciation of the natural world, by offering environmental, conservation, and science programs to all ages. PMEC strives to foster diligent stewardship of our environment so that future generations may inherit and continue to be inspired by the wonders of a protected and natural world. More information on PMEC programs can be found on our website at [www.pmec.org](http://www.pmec.org) or by calling 603-673-1141 or 603-673-6248.